



## TOWN OF BEAUX ARTS VILLAGE

### PLANNING COMMISSION

### MINUTES

October 20, 2005

Hobbs

**Present:** Acting Chairman Sylvia Hobbs, Commissioners Karen Scott, Dennis Casey, Jake Donoghue

**Guests:** Joanne Bromberg, Helen Lewis, Paula Dix, Julia Morse

**Deputy Town Clerk:** Betsy Donworth

Acting Chairman Hobbs called the meeting to order.

**Minutes:** Commissioner Casey moved to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2005 meeting as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

**Cottage Housing Issue:** Chairman Hobbs opened the discussion on the cottage housing issue, focusing on the October 17, 2005 memo to the Planning Commission from John Rose, which uses the phrase “small housing” (as opposed to the phrase “cottage housing” which seemed to result in confusion). The memo, entitled “Encouraging small housing opportunities” outlines the reasons why this concept could be appealing in Beaux Arts, and clarifies that the real goal should be to encourage smaller housing opportunities in the Village. Mr. Rose also pointed out that a first step in developing this concept should be to ascertain whether this is a problem worth working on. Reasons cited for why the Village should create more opportunities for small scale housing include:

- **Creating opportunities for downsizing.** A number of long-time Village residents have had to leave the neighborhood when it came time to downsize. We would like to create more housing opportunities in Beaux Arts that would allow for smaller maintenance responsibilities and the financial benefits of a smaller home.
- **Creating opportunities for smaller families.** Modern families take many forms, and many families have no need for three or more bedrooms and a three, or even a two car garage.
- **Maintaining some diversity in housing prices in the Village.** Smaller houses will not be inexpensive, but smaller sizes can create opportunities for homes in lower price ranges.
- **Providing an alternative to the current trend toward very large houses.** We have noted the trend toward tearing down existing homes and replacing them with very

- large houses. We would like to provide smaller alternatives that can still make financial sense for buyers and sellers.
- **Making the Town's actions more consistent with the State and region's growth management goals.** Many public policies are encouraging "infill" to make better use of land and of scarce public resources.

The commissioners continued their discussion on whether the small housing idea should be entertained, envisioning how it might look like for an existing lot of 15,000 sq. ft. to be divided into four lots and what the overall impact would be on neighbors/the Village. Paula Dix pointed out that once permission is granted to increase density, a precedent would be set for other lots to be developed in this way. Commissioners Casey and Scott stated that the idea must be presented to Villagers to see their reaction to the idea.

Agreeing to open up the discussion of small housing to the Villages at a public meeting, the Commissioners discussed the logistics of the meeting and how information on the topic should be made available. It was agreed that the meeting would be held at Jake Donoghue's home, as opposed to an off-site meeting space, as this might encourage more Villagers to attend. Information explaining the concept will be sent out to Villagers in their Town Bulletin, and information will also be posted on the Beaux Arts website. Mona Green will be available at the meeting to answer questions relating to zoning. Jake will get an aerial photo of the Village for the meeting. It will be decided after the meeting if there is enough interest among Villagers to go forward with this idea.

**Minor Structural Elements in Setbacks:** Commissioner Scott brought up for discussion the issue of modifying the Beaux Arts zoning code to allow for minor structural elements in setbacks. She stated that by allowing such intrusions, positive home design is encouraged; by not providing for such intrusions, character is reduced. Commissioner Hobbs questioned how this could be accomplished without reducing/compromising current setbacks. Further discussion focused on the protocol of bringing up an issue for discussion at the Planning Commission. Commissioner Hobbs felt strongly that the Town Council needs to direct the Planning Commission to address an issue, citing the Town's bylaws. Commissioner Scott questioned this procedure, and it was agreed that clarification of the issue is needed. Deputy Clerk Donworth will discuss the issue with Clerk Spens, and see that the issue is on the agenda for the next Town Council meeting.

**Adjourn:** Acting Chairman Hobbs moved to adjourn. Commissioner Donoghue seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Donworth  
Deputy Town Clerk

